Task Force on transformation of India into a 'Knowledge Superpower'

4250. SHRI R.R GOENKA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Task Force set up by the Planning Commission to suggest strategy for transformation of India into a "Knowledge Super Power" has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details of the thrust areas of study and major recommendations made by the Task Force;

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon; and

(d) in what way a vision of India in this respect compare with the expected progress by neighbouring countries in the next 20 years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) Copy of the recommendations of the Task Force has been placed in the Parliament Library for reference.

(c) Report has been submitted to the Hon'ble Prime Minister. It has also been circulated to all ministries and State Governments. The Task Force has recommended that a Cabinet Committee on Knowledge Society should be constituted.

(d) The Task Force has visualized India's emergence as knowledge superpower taking into account its natural resource endowments, *viz,* vast coast line, minerals unique biodiversity and human resources in particular skilled manpower.

Poverty alleviation programmes

4251. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the poverty alleviation programmes in the country have been found ineffective in so far its formulation and implementation arc concerned;

(b) if so, whether the Planning Commission has expressed its serious concern over the formulation and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in the country;

(c) if so, the factors responsible for the ineffective implementation of such programmes; and

(d) the concrete action plan envisaged to implement the programmes effectively ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) The Planning Commission has prepared the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997—2002) which contains a review of various Poverty Alleviation Programmes. The highlights of the Mid-Term Appraisal pertaining to Poverty Alleviation Programmes are given in the statement. (See below).

(d) The strategy for Poverty Alleviation includes acceleration of economic growth with a focus on employment intensive sectors, access to basic minimum services for improving the quality of life of the people and direct State intervention in the form of targeted anti poverty programmes. Anti-poverty programmes supplement the growth effort and protect the poor from destitution, sharp fluctuations in employment and incomes, and social insecurity. The specifically designed anti poverty programmes for generation of both self employment and wage employment in rural, areas have been redesigned and restructured in 1999-2000 in order to enhance their efficacy/impact on the poor and improve their sustainability. Self and wage employment schemes in the urban areas were also restructured *w.e.f.* 01.12.1997 under Swarnjayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana. The review of the restructured programmes would form part of the Tenth Plan exercise which has already started.

STATEMENT

High lights of Mid-Term Appraisal of the
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997—2002)

Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes

Poverty-Alleviation Programmes

Poverty had declined substantially in 1980s. Proportion of people below poverty line declined from 54.9 % in 1973-74 to 36 % in 1993-94. However, recent estimates suggest that the projections on reduction of proportion and number of people below poverty line made in the Ninth Plan have not been realised in the first two years of the plan period.

This may be due to: sluggish agricultural growth which was also less well spread out; labour absorption did not increase hence slow down in growtli of real wages; failure of poverty alleviation and watershed development schemes; continuance of certain policies that act against the interest of the poorest, especially tribals; inadequate reach of TPDS to the poorest in the Northern and Eastern States; fiscal crisis caused by the Vth Pay Commission that led to reduced ability of the States to spend on social sectors; limited growtli of mral non-farm sector and poor governance.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) evaluation points: sub-critical investment; unviable projects; illiterate and unskilled beneficiaries with no experience in managing an enterprise; indifferent delivery of credit by banks, overcrowding of lending in certain projects such as dairy; under emphasis on activities like trading, service and even simple processing, poor targeting and selection of non-poor; rising indebtedness; scale of IRDP outstripped capacity of government and banks to absorb.

Integrated Rural Development Programme-Allied Programmes: TRYSEM not dovetailed with IRDP. Non-existent training centres, nonpayment of stipend (Chhapra study). DWCRA did well in some States (A.P., Kerala, Gujarat).

Sawarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (the successor to IRDP): aims at micro-enterprises with emphasis on cluster approach. It is a credit-cum-subsidy programme. Focus on self-help groups. In the past, subsidy orientation leads to corruption and distortion of objectives. Too early to evaluate.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana evaluation points: inadequate employment (11 days as per concurrent evaluation); thin spread of resources; violation of material-labour norms; corruption (fudging of muster rolls). Projects were executed by contractors who sometimes hired outside labourers at lower wages. Positive aspects: durable community assets and empowerment of gram Panchayats. Redesigned in April 1999 as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana. Primary aim now rural infrastructure. Employment is secondary. Too early to evaluate.

Employment Assurance Scheme, initially demand-driven. Funds went to better-off states. Evaluation by PEO: scheme is being executed through contractors in most of the States in violation of the central guidelines; me norm of 60:40 for wage and material is not maintained; the genuine muster ro! Is are not being maintained by the Gram Panchayats. Family cards have not been issued.

ston of registration of job seekers with Gram Panchayats

Central norms of earmarking, 40 per cent of funds for watershed development and 20 per cent for minor irrigation, have not been followed.

From April 1999 restructured as the single wage employment scheme; became allocative; 30% of funds allocated to district reserved for areas suffering from endemic labour exodus/areas of distress. Need to shift focus only to backward areas; should not be a universal scheme.

NSAP. Well-targeted. Fewer leakages reported Needs more resources.

Delivery mechanism. A major weakness in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes has been the lack of adequate participation by the people for whom the programmes are meant. There should be emphasis on the role of PRIs and NGOs.

State Initiatives do better because of better ownership and flexibility in the design of programmes to suit local conditions. Examples: Gokul Gram Yojana, Apna Gaon Apna Kaam, Kudumshree.

Rural Housing: Indira Awaas Yojana (1AY) became an Independent CSS from 1.1.1996. Free of cost houses are provided to below poverty line families. Unit cost is Rs.20,000 in plain and Rs.22,000 in hill/tribal areas. Updation of existing houses at a unit cost of Rs. 10,000 is now permissible. A new component of credit-cum-subsidy has also been added. In any given village/block/district it would take a long time before all the families are covered. This is dividing the poor instead of helping them to organise into groups. Despite orders, gram sabhas are not active in deciding beneficiaries.

Land Reforms: Access to land is still critical for employment and income generation in rural areas.

Access to land is possible through liberalisation of leasing, but leasing-in should be limited to small and marginal farmers. In areas characterised by feudal/ semi feudal modes of production, there is need to further strengthen the existing laws for security of tenure of the poor.

Alienation of tribal land continues unabated but need? to be arrested.

Gender inequality exists in both inheritance laws and land laws. Suitable Amendments are required to make inheritance laws to agricultural land more gender equal.

There is need to update land records and to computerise them to make access to information easier.

U rtoan Development, Housing and Poverty Alleviation

Urban poverty remains an area of significant and persistent neglect in public policy and is a manifestation of lack of income and purchasing power attributable to lack of productive employment, high rate of inflation, lack of access to social infrastructure, affecting the quality of life of the people. The 1993-94 official estimate of the total urban population 'below poverty line' was 32.36%.

The modified urban poverty alleviation programme re-named as Swama Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) consists of two schemes, (a) the Urban Self Employment Programme (USEP) and (b) the Urban Wage Employment Programme (U WEP). Impact assessment has been suggested.

Evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

† 4252. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Planning Commission has advised the Central Government to make an independent evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the Government's reaction mereto; and

(c) the criterion presently adopted by Government to evaluate the development of Centrally Sponsored Schemes ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Planning Commission in it's Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five Year Plan has indicated that there are too many Centrally Sponsored Schemes to monitor. The number needs to be curtailed. In several sectors, there have been a large number of plan schemes with similar objectives targeting the same population. The Planning Commission has taken the following steps in this regard :

(i) A Committee of the National Development Council, on transfer of Centrally Sponsored Schemes has been set up under the Chairmanship of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.